North American Seasonal Fire Potential Outlook

Predictive Services
National Interagency Fire Center
and
Natural Resources Canada

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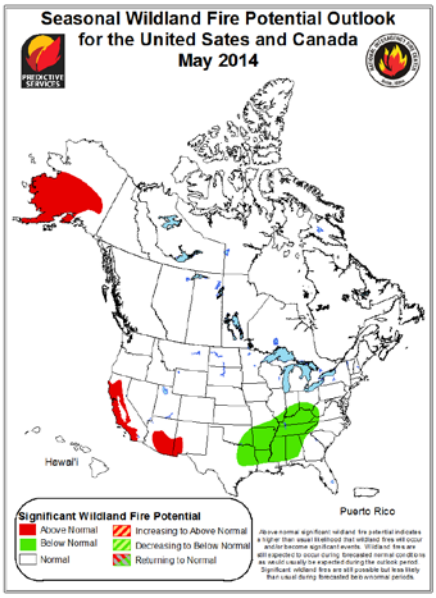
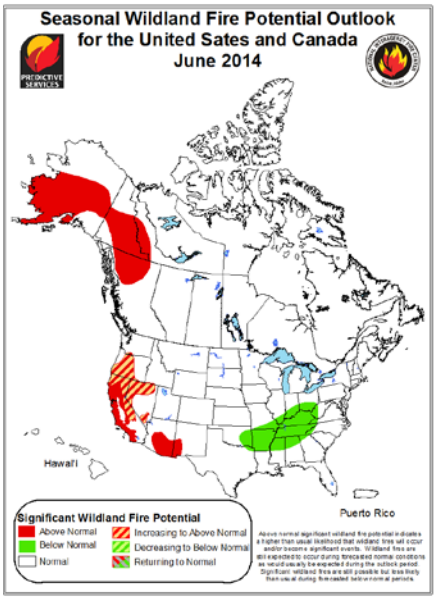
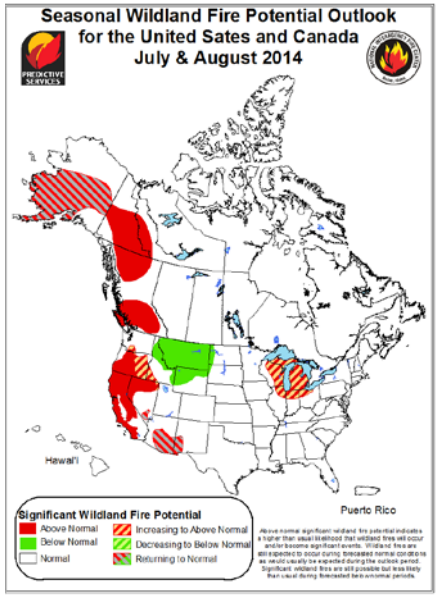
Outlook Period – May, June and July through August

Fire Potential Outlook

The maps below show the fire potential outlook for May through August, 2014, across the United States and Canada. In May, significant wildland fire potential will be above normal across: portions of the southwestern Alaska: the coastal and central mountains of California; southeastern Arizona; and southwestern New Mexico. A large portion of the southeastern U.S., from eastern Texas to the Ohio Valley, will have below normal fire potential. By June, above normal fire potential will cover: much of southern Alaska; much of the Yukon; northern British Columbia; much of California; western Oregon; northern Nevada, southeastern Arizona; and southwestern New Mexico. Below normal fire potential will cover: much of the mid-Mississippi, Tennessee, and Ohio Valleys. In July and August, above normal fire potential will cover: most of Yukon; much of British Columbia; much of California; Oregon; southwestern Idaho; northern and western Nevada; and parts of the Great Lakes region. Fire potential will decrease to normal in Alaska and the southwestern U.S. Below normal fire potential will cover much of the northern U.S. Rockies.







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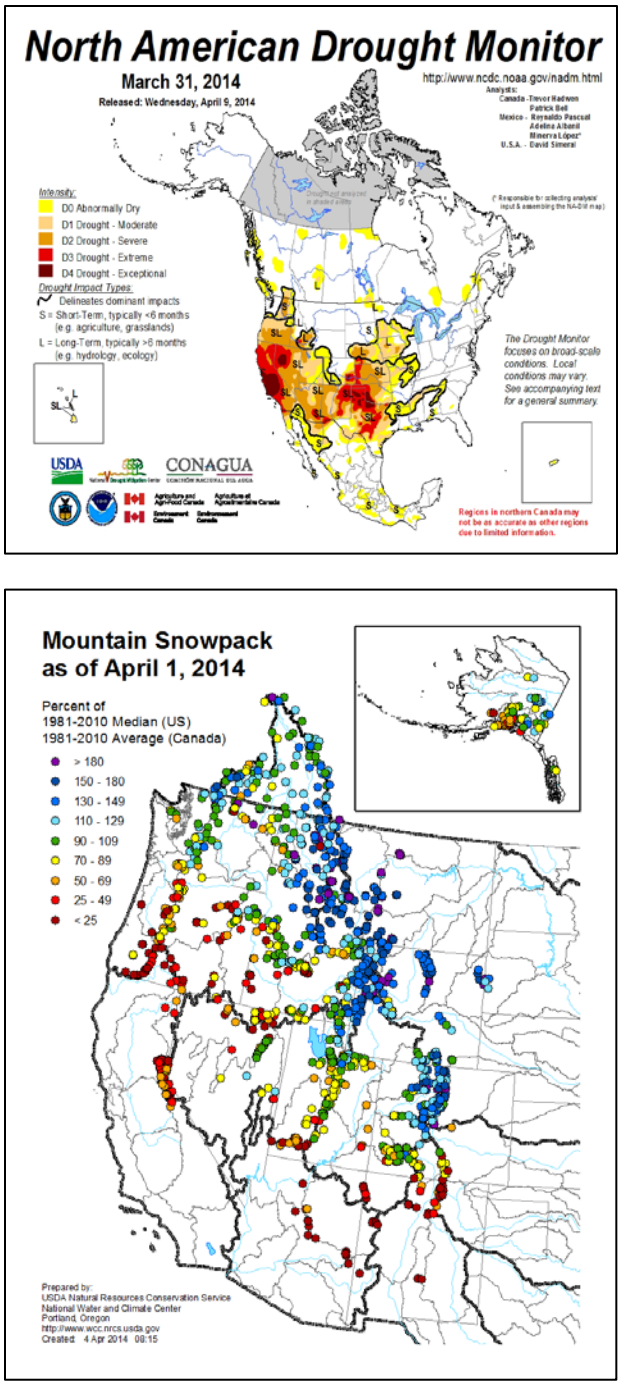
The critical factors influencing significant fire potential for this outlook period are:

- **Drought:** The North American Drought Monitor from March 31, 2014, (at right) shows severe to exceptional drought over most of the southwestern quarter of the U.S. with the worst conditions in California, northern Nevada, western Oklahoma, western Texas, and eastern New Mexico. In Canada, a small area in far southern British Columbia is experiencing moderate to severe drought. Elsewhere, only scattered areas of abnormally dry conditions exist.
- **Snowpack:** Canada had near to above normal snow cover over northern parts of the Prairie Provinces and the Canadian Rockies, most of which fell in November and December. Snow amounts ranged from 60 to 150 percent of normal in Canada. Parts of northern Saskatchewan, northern Manitoba, and northwestern Ontario, had below average snowpack. Across the U.S., snowpack was well above normal across the northern and central Rocky Mountains and the northern Cascades. All other areas had well below normal snowpack.
- **Fuels:** Though fall conditions were extremely dry in western Canada, overwinter snowfall returned these conditions to near normal. In eastern Canada, low fuel moisture will increase fire potential early. Western Canada will transition to above normal potential as fuels dry. Dry conditions across the western U.S. have led to abnormally low fuel moisture.
- **Fire Season Onset:** Much of Canada is still under snow cover so expect a late start to the fire season. Fire season will begin early across much of the western U.S.
- **North American Monsoon:** El Nino will have a significant impact on the development of the North American Monsoon. The most likely scenario at this point indicates the monsoon will be pushed farther east than usual and will have less impact than usual across portion of Arizona, California and the Great Basin.



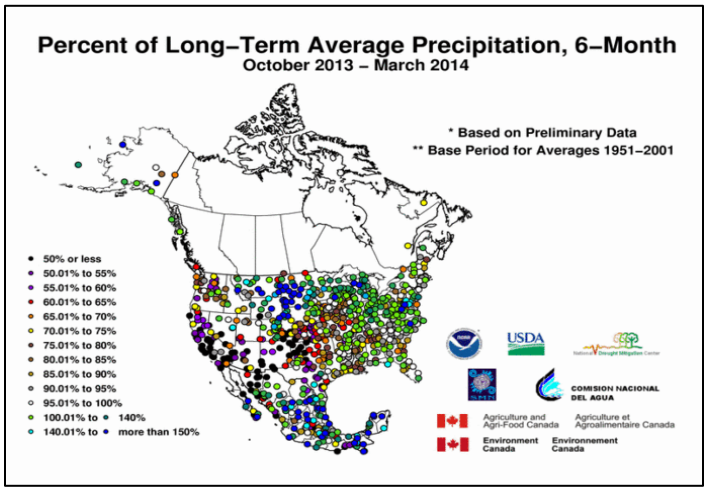
Top: North American Drought Monitor (*from U.S National Climatic Data Center, NCDC/NOAA).* **Bottom:** Mountain snowpack, percent of average (*from National Resources Conservation Service, NRCS*).

Climate Conditions

Global circulations that typically give some indication of medium to long term weather patterns are suggesting the development of an El Niño cycle. Predictions for this spring and summer are favoring the development of a moderate El Niño, but there is still significant uncertainty about how strong it will become. This will be a major factor determining weather patterns for this summer and beyond.

Temperature and Precipitation

Much of the U.S. West, Southwest, and southern Plains received less than half of normal precipitation from October through March. The 3-month period from December through February was the driest on record for portions of California. In contrast, much above normal precipitation occurred in the north central U.S. Farther east, the Upper Midwest and the Northeast recorded normal precipitation for the same 6-month period. Precipitation was near normal across Mexico with much above normal precipitation in the Gulf Coast and Yucatan regions.



Top: Percent of Long-Term Precipitation, 6-Month (*from National Climatic Data Center NCDC/NOAA).*

Temperatures (not shown) were well above normal for the southwestern quarter of the U.S. for the period October through March while record cold overtook the entire Plains region from South Central Canada southward to the Gulf Coast. The Rocky Mountain region recorded near normal temperatures for the same period.

NOAA's Climate Prediction Center (CPC) is indicating a higher probability of warmer-than-normal conditions for most of the west and south central U.S. in May, expanding across the southeastern and eastern U.S. in June through August. Alaska is also expected to be warmer-than-normal. Colder-than-normal conditions across the northern Plains to the Great Lakes region are expected in May.

Below median precipitation is expected from the Alaska Panhandle to northern California in May and above median for Florida and southern Georgia. Below median precipitation is expected for most of the Gulf coast June through August with above median precipitation expected across the Four Corners region.

Outlook Objectives

The North American Significant Wildland Fire Potential Outlook is intended as a decision-support tool for wildland fire managers, providing an assessment of current weather and fuels conditions and how these will evolve in the next four months. The objective is to assist fire managers in making proactive decisions that will improve protection of life and property, increase fire fighter safety and effectiveness, and reduce firefighting costs.